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TAGS: [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [PGOV](#) [EFIN](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA HOSTS "ACCORD" REGIONAL DRUG TASKFORCE;
APPEALS FOR MONEY LAUNDERING ASSISTANCE

Classified By: COM Carmen Martinez for Reasons 1.5 (B,D)

11. (C) Summary: On Oct. 16 Burma hosted the law enforcement taskforce of the ASEAN region's cooperative counterdrug entity, ACCORD. Members agreed that amphetamines pose the biggest drug threat to the region, lauded UNODC computer-based training for law enforcement, and demonstrated varying degrees of progress on money laundering issues. For its part, Burma uncharacteristically kept the drug meeting apolitical but made a last-minute appeal for assistance in enacting a mutual legal assistance law, barely two weeks before FATF is likely to recommend countermeasures. End Summary.

12. (U) On October 16, the Government of Burma hosted a one-day meeting of ACCORD, the "ASEAN and China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs." The session was the second meeting of ACCORD's "third pillar" (law enforcement) since the entity was established in 2000 with the objective of pursuing a drug-free ASEAN by the year 2015. In addition to ACCORD members (the ten ASEAN countries and China), attendees also included observers from UNODC, Interpol, Germany, Australia, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Japan, and the United States (Embassy DEA and P/E chiefs represented the latter). The ACCORD meeting followed by one day the 24th Meeting of ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD), also held in Rangoon.

13. (U) Burmese Police Colonel Hkam Aung chaired the taskforce, and UNODC and each of the ACCORD members gave presentations on progress achieved with the five action steps of the law enforcement pillar: law enforcement training, precursor control, international cooperation, judicial drug control, and money laundering legislation. UNODC said that the U.N. calls ACCORD the "best counternarcotics plan in the world" and urged members to increase multilateral cooperation. Thailand, represented by General Chartchai Suthiklom, Deputy Secretary-General of the Thai Narcotics Control Board, gave perhaps the most comprehensive treatment of all third pillar issues by any single ACCORD member. Brunei also gave a detailed assessment of counterdrug actions. Cambodia's presentation, though less sophisticated, was notable for its honest assessment of a growing domestic drug abuse problem, particularly among school children. Malaysia, Vietnam, and the Philippines gave mediocre presentations that were neither comprehensive nor forward-leaning.

14. (C) The country presentations varied considerably in their quality and, although it was difficult to draw overall conclusions from the diverse presentations, several region-wide themes emerged. First, the entire ACCORD membership considers the production and trafficking of amphetamine-type substances (ATS) to be the fastest-growing, and most significant, drug challenge in the region. Second, of the law enforcement pillar's five action steps, law enforcement training appears to be the most successful. Members reported very positively, in particular, on efforts to use and implement UNODC computer-based training programs (CBT).

15. (C) Finally, the weakest action step, from our perspective, is the development of money laundering legislation and authorities. Only a handful of the countries could speak definitively on this issue, and several members (including China) ignored the topic altogether. Indonesia reported that it is no longer a FATF "blacklisted" country, but pressed UNODC for more training of police officers on financial investigations. UNODC responded that training is available, but with regard to "blacklisting" does not support the "unilateral determination" of whether individual countries are cooperating sufficiently on money laundering. Indonesia, eliciting laughter from ACCORD members, especially the Burmese delegation, urged UNODC to convince FATF to take the same approach.

16. (C) Comment: The SPDC, Burma's military regime, which typically uses rare opportunities to host regional meetings as a means to enhance its legitimacy, managed to resist hijacking the ACCORD meeting for political objectives. The Burmese police officials who represent Burma at ACCORD were professional during this meeting and their military minders

made only ceremonial appearances. The Burmese gave accurate and positive reports on recent, successful efforts to reduce opium production and cultivation. On money laundering issues, however, the Burmese were woefully inaccurate and unprepared. Police Colonel Sit Aye, director for international affairs at the Central Committee for Drugs Abuse Control (CCDAC), reported that a mutual legal assistance law had been drafted and sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs on October 13 for ministerial-level review. However, he appealed before ACCORD members and observers to the UNODC for technical assistance in finalizing the process. When we queried Colonel Sit Aye in a pull-aside whether this appeal appeared to be "too little, too late" to meet FATF's November 3 deadline for enacting legislation, he demurred and said the matter was out of his hands.

Martinez